# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2888
ANSWERED ON:15.03.2016
Decline in Population of Dolphins
Lekhi Smt. Meenakashi;Mahajan Smt. Poonam

**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE ???? ??? ???? ?????? ??????
be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the population of Ganga River Dolphins has declined considerably and that they are on the verge of extinction;
(b) if so, the details thereof including the total number of dolphins in the country at present, State/UT-wise and the reasons therefor;
(c) whether the developmental activities in and around the river system have resulted in shrinking of its habitat and decline of Ganga River Dolphins; and
(d) if so, details of the steps taken by the Government to regulate these developmental activities as well as the other measures taken by the Government to increase the population of the Ganga River Dolphins?

## Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(DR.SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a) & (b). As reported by the Ministry of Water Resource, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, the Ganga River Dolphin, Platanista gangetica is distributed in the Gangetic-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli − Sangu River systems in India, Nepal and Bangladesh and the population has declined considerably and that they are on the verge of extinction. The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata has also stated that the population of the Ganga River Dolphin has declined considerably in many stretches of the River Ganga and its tributaries. According to the Wild Life Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, this species is facing a series of threats for survival in recent years. The Ministry of Water Resource, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has informed that the total population of Ganga River Dolphin is estimated to be between 2500-3000 in its entire distribution range, out of which more than 80 % is within the Indian Territory. Moreover, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has informed that a study was undertaken by the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department under the National Mission for Clean Ganga, in which a census of Ganga River Dolphin was carried out during October 2015 in the Uttar Pradesh part of the Ganga River and its tributaries such as Yamuna, Son, Ken, Betwa, Ghangra and Gerua and it was reported that around 1263 Dolphins were recorded in comparison to 671 recorded previously. State / Union Territory-wise population estimates of Dolphins are not collated as reported by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

(c) & (d). Organizations like WII, ZSI and MoEF&CC informed that developmental activities like construction of dams and barrages, embankments etc besides unsustainable obstruction of river water, mining of sand and stones, low river flow, incidental catches in gill nets, deforestation in catchment area are mainly responsible for shrinking of habitat and decline of Ganga River Dolphins.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has informed that the following steps are being taken by the Government to regulate developmental activities and to increase the population of Ganga River Dolphin.
â€¢ Ganga River Dolphins are listed in Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection Act 1972) thereby according them the highest degree of protection against hunting.
â€¢ The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has designated Ganga River Dolphins as National Aquatic Animal.
â€¢ A Working Group for developing a conservation Action Plan for Ganges River Dolphin for 2010-2020 has been constituted by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change.
â€¢ Wildlife Sanctuaries covering important Dolphin habitats have been created in the country under the provision of the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 to conserve their habitats. These include National Chambal Sanctuary, Saranath Turtle Sanctuary, Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary.
â€¢ Ganga River Dolphin is one of the 16 Species identified for taking up Recovery programme of Critically Endangered Species under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat.
â€¢ Government has taken initiatives for increasing the river flow under Namami Ganga Programme 'Aviral Dhara Nirmal Dhara'.
â€¢ The National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) Advisory Council in its 6th Meeting held on 08th July 2015 has approved an amount of Rs.23.00 crore for 5 years for recovery programme of Ganga River Dolphin (Platanista gangetica).

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